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## Rogers Theory on Diffusion of Innovation - The Most Appropriate Theoretical Model in the Study of Factors Influencing the Integration of Sustainability in Tourism Businesses

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### Abstract

Sustainable tourism development is now a necessity of time. All the parties involved in tourism should participate in efforts to sustainable tourism development. Sustainability, as the best way of doing business today, is a new concept in the tourism sector and sustainable tourism practices can be considered as a new type of innovation in the tourism industry. Therefore knowledge of the factors affecting tourism businesses to integrate sustainability in their activities is critical. Without this type of information, we are limited in our ability to design tools that work in the future to mitigate barriers and increase motivations tourism businesses to adopt sustainable tourism practices in their activity. Factors' influencing in the integration of sustainable practices into business activities is very subject discussed in different industries and different scientific disciplines after the late 80's. However, a limited number of studies addressed perspective of tourism businesses to adopt sustainable tourism practices. These studies have used different theoretical models. This paper undertakes the analysis of these models from the review of literatures, giving their advantages and limitations in the study of the factors influencing businesses to adopt sustainable tourism practices. After analysis, the paper finally concludes that Rogers's theory on adaptation and diffusion of innovation is a suitable theoretical model in the study of factors influencing the adoption of sustainable tourism practices in tourism businesses.

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## **1. Introduction**

Nowadays, sustainable development is a necessary of the time. Many countries are developing tourism because it has the potential to contribute positively to the socio - economic development of the country. But while tourism serves as a development agent, rapid unlimited expansion and no right managed of tourism can make it a harmful agent changes in socio-economic and ecological environment of these countries. Therefore, for development of successful today and in the future, countries with tourist appeal should develop tourism in a sustainable manner. In these countries, sustainable tourism development needs to be reflected in their development policies.

The World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as: “tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions, while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future” (WTO, 1998: 21). The challenge for tourist countries is to encourage the development and management of tourism products that will provide economic and social benefits to those countries while enhance customer appeal, protecting and enhancing their natural and cultural attributes. Further, Ritchie and Crouch (2003) argue that the development of tourism in a destination should be sustainable from an economic, ecological, socio-cultural perspective, to be competitive. Being competitive, tourism can contribute successful to the development (UNWTO, 2013).

Today, tourism businesses are competing in creating more values to customers. Research and analysis of the current model of tourism demand show that visitors are becoming more selective in the choice of tourism destinations and businesses. They are showing a greater sensitivity to traditional culture, local population, environmental quality in choosing tourism destinations and businesses. Therefore, sustainable tourism development will lead to maintaining competitive advantage of tourism destinations and will serve as a crucial catalyst to tourism business growth.

In conditions of this increased competition among tourist destinations and businesses, that tourism further continue its growth to respond positively tourist demand, it is required the application of the principles and practices of sustainability in adjustments to tourism development and management. In efforts to sustainable tourism development should take part all parties involved in tourism. Without such cooperation, any effort towards sustainable tourism will remain unfinished. But the power of business to influence the sustainable management of tourist destinations is very large because most of the elements of the tourism product are in the hands of the tourist business sector. Also, tourism businesses have ability in managing tourism demand because they are the ones that directly respond to market forces and that their decisions are determined by the knowledge of customer needs and by the goal of earnings (Middelton & Hawkins, 1998; Swarbrooke, 2002). So the integration of sustainability in the management of tourism businesses is of great importance in maintaining the high quality of the tourist experience and in increasing competitive advantage of the tourism businesses. Integration of sustainability in tourism businesses is not about doing business differently, but it is about doing business better. By making sustainability a focus, tourism businesses can save money whilst enhance customer appeal, develop a competitive advantage, mitigate their impact on the environment and support local economy (Graci & Dodds, 2008; Taylor, 2008).

Research and reality indicate that the general behaviour of tourism businesses is unsustainable. Thinking of tourist business management is dominated by short-term economic aims. This is a great concern. This fact leads to the need for research to find practical ways to change the attitude of business as a precondition for achieving sustainable tourism development. But the effort to develop practical ways, strategies for sustainable tourism without sufficient management information reduces process of political aspiration of it (Middelton & Hawkins, 1998). If we understand their motivations and behavior, we better understand their behavior and therefore are in a better position to influence future behavior of tourism businesses. In these conditions, in efforts to increase the involvement of tourism businesses in the development of sustainable tourism and to adopt responsible behaviors is critical recognition of motivation and barriers that affect the integration of sustainability in tourism business activity in order to find strategies and tools that enhance their motivations and mitigate difficulties that they face.

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